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## **Auroville Bulletin 62**

### **AVFO attempts takeover of Auroville Services, Maël 'removed from RoR'**

A Summary of Events Happening in Auroville Today

Tuesday, 18th April 2023

*Note: There are important actions to take at the end of each Bulletin, if you are reading on your phone you may need to click 'see more' to view the entire bulletin.*

**Please find a glossary of acronyms and terms used in this bulletin [here](#).**

## **Urgent actions needed**

- **Share the new 'Voice of Auroville' journal:** this journal aims to inform well wishers and friends all over India and the world about what's happening in Auroville. You can find the first issue [here](#). Please share it with friends and family outside of Auroville to inform them on current events.
- **BCC calls for support for Aurovilians on bridging maintenances:** 25+ Aurovilians working for Auroville have been moved onto bridging maintenances without warning. Please see [here](#) for more information, and email BCC on [bccoffice@auroville.services](mailto:bccoffice@auroville.services) or [bccauroville@gmail.com](mailto:bccauroville@gmail.com).
- **Financial support for legal fees:** If you can donate towards legal and delegation fees, please email [evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com). Please see [here](#) for more information about why further financial assistance is necessary.
- **Help with the AVC room vigil :** Please participate! For nearly 8 months the community has held a 24/7 vigil in the AVC room in Town Hall. **More people are needed** to ensure the round-the-clock presence. Please contact [avcouncil@auroville.services](mailto:avcouncil@auroville.services), WhatsApp 94430 03617 to sign up. See [here](#) for more information.
- **Join the Wednesdays for Auroville meetings:** There is a weekly community meeting held at the Tibetan Pavilion, every Wednesday 5:00-6:30 pm.

## Hot Topics

### **AVFO attempts to take over more Units and Services**

In very short succession, attempts to take over several key Auroville Services were made by the AVFO. Executives were called to meet online at very short notice and were verbally informed that they would be replaced. Affected services are the Visitor's Centre, Auroville Safety & Security Service, Ecoservice, and SAIER, and one commercial unit, Afsaneh Guesthouse.

**Auroville Art Service** received an email at 10.45am on Thursday April 13th requesting a meeting only 45 minutes later, at 11.30am. The Auroville Art Service executives were then locked out of their mailboxes without warning the same day.

**Ecoservice** executives were asked to meet online and were informed that they would be replaced the next day, Friday April 14th. However, the new 'executives' failed to show up at the planned time.

**Visitors Centre** executives, Nicole and Angad, attended an in-person meeting with the Secretary and were told that they had been involved in the Visitors Centre for too long and it was time for "new blood" to come in. The new 'executives' are reported to be Aneetha Pathak (of Aneetha's Kitchen), Lieve (ACUR manager and AVFO 'ATDC' secretary), and two others, Sanjay and Ravi (workplace unknown). The current executives were locked out of their mailboxes on April 13th.

**The SAIER Board** was similarly called in for a meeting on April 14th and informed that SAIER (the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research) would be 'restructured' with some members being displaced. The names of those to be taken out are yet to be disclosed.

**Afsaneh Guesthouse** and the **Auroville Safety and Security Service** were also locked out of their mailboxes on April 14th, with no reasons or prior intimation given.

The RA WCom sent [a massbulletin](#) condemning the attempted takeovers, noting that "[t]here have been no notices given, no hearings, no reasons, no written orders - in short no due process has been followed." Many of the executives of these services have dedicated their lives to these services for years, sometimes for decades and now at risk of finding themselves displaced without reason.

## AVFO 'WCom' announces Maël's 'removal' from RoR

Maël Shanti, an Aurovillian youth who is a member of the RA WCom, was recently served a “Leave India Notice” and was forced to leave the country on the 1st of March. This was widely thought to be due to his opposition to the actions of the AVFO as a member of the RA WCom. He has not been able to return so far. On Saturday 17th April the AVFO ‘WCom’ communicated via [an Auronet post](#) that they had received a communication from the AVFO that in light of Maël’s Leave India notice, “Mael will be removed from Register of Residents (RoR) and action has been taken regarding his access on all other platforms.” No official communication from the AVFO was attached to this message.

The RA WCom subsequently sent out [a massbulletin](#) in which they note that this move is not only severely lacking in light of the community values of Auroville, but also illegal, as per the Auroville Foundation Act Section 19(2)(a), “Admission and Termination of residents in the Register of Residents (and from the Master List) is the exclusive prerogative of the Residents' Assembly [...] Therefore, the Secretary and the individuals calling themselves the 'Working Committee', which were not selected by the RA, cannot make this decision according to the law and to our internal guidelines and mandates. This is a clear case of misuse and abuse of power.” The RA WCom further added that they are “taking the matter forward and will keep the community informed as and when more information is available.”

## **MoE raises questions about GB meeting minutes**

The Ministry of Education (MoE) sent a [letter](#) to the Secretary making several comments regarding the 61st and 62nd meeting minutes of the Governing Board (GB). One point they made was regarding the GB's approval of a sub-committee for the purchase of AV land, about which they reminded the GB that “no land belonging to the Government... shall be sold without previous sanction of the Government”. A [Right to Information](#) (RTI) request on the subject of land acquisition & sales processes in Auroville has shown that during the Secretary's tenure no such permission has been sought.

Other observations the MoE raised were:

- The inclusion of an MoE member on any internal committee of the GB is not appropriate.
- That the MoE is unaware of the processes followed for the appointment of AVF contractual staff.
- Questioning why the words “after seeking approval from the MoE” were removed from approved minutes.
- The agenda for the 62nd GB meeting was not shared with MoE prior to the meeting as per protocol. This meeting went ahead in Chennai also without any information being shared with the community beforehand, and only came to light after a [social media update](#) was shared by a GB member. The minutes for the 62nd meeting have still not been shared with the community.

### **RA WCom observations**

The RA WCom shared a [massbulletin](#) with their observations on the 60th and 61st GB minutes. The minutes of the July & November 2022 meetings were only shared on the AVF website in March 2023. A number of issues related to the transparency of information being shared by the GB were raised, as it is apparent that several committees and projects are being formed and approved by the GB without sharing information with the wider community. This includes the GB approval for Auroville to become a ‘Smart City’.

Their observations on the 60th GB minutes are [here](#) and those for the 61st minutes are [here](#).

## **Other updates and Information**

### **Voice of Auroville**

The RA Wcom shared via [massbulletin](#) a new publication named 'Voice of Auroville'. The publication aims to inform "well wishers and friends of Auroville across India and the globe with factual updates and crisp articles on what is unfolding in Auroville".

You can find Issue 1 [here](#).



**ISSUE 01**  
APRIL 2023

# VOICE OF AUROVILLE

News & Highlights from the Auroville Community



This publication is endorsed by the Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly of the Auroville Foundation.

**AURÖVILLE**  
Media Liaison

## **Bharat Nivas cancels Miraculous Productions play**

Just two weeks prior to the planned performance, Bharat Nivas (BN) Trustees sent a [letter](#) to Miraculous Productions (MP) to inform them that they will not allow the play 'Jane Bonda' to go ahead at the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium as previously agreed. This move follows weeks of negotiations between the MP team and the Trustees and managers of BN, which appeared to have come to an amicable resolution when MP agreed to make certain changes to the script and to begin the play with a 'disclaimer'.

The Trustees decided to cancel the showing regardless with very short notice. The Trustees stated that they received "significant negative feedback from various sections of Auroville" and that after a meeting at the AVFO - to which the MP team were not invited - they decided to cancel the performance. The issue of whether to stage the performance was seemingly sparked by [a community member raising objections on Auronet](#) about the play's presumed 'political satire'.

## **Notices from RA Working Groups**

### **AV Council monthly report**

The AV Council shared their report for February & March 2023.

You can find the full massbulletin [here](#), also the Conflict Resolution sub group report is [here](#).

## **About us**

We are a group of Aurovilians who are actively involved in understanding the current crisis situation in Auroville in order to find a way forward together.

We stand for:

- Respecting our community processes for decision-making
- A collaborative approach in developing Auroville using integrated methods such as the Dreamweaving initiative
- Transparency and fairness in the organisation of Auroville
- Creating unity with our diverse voices

Please note that the website <https://standforaurovilleunity.com/> contains a great deal of information and a detailed timeline.

With regard to future actions, those who have particular skills such as writing, social media, film editing etc - you are welcome to write to [evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com](mailto:evolvinggalaxy@gmail.com).

We hope this has been helpful. Let's keep working to find a way to bring us closer together to the beautiful dream of human unity in Auroville. We can do it... together.

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